

TIMES AND TRAILS

People, Projects and Priorities at Environment and Conservation

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In Vision

Environment and Conservation employees:

I continue to encounter TDEC staff across the state who are helping to make our service delivery even more responsive and efficient. For example, this issue of *Times and Trails* highlights the First Tennessee Development District's recent recognition of our Johnson City Field Office. From innovative solutions to challenging solid waste issues to successful water and air quality partnerships, the Tri-Cities has many examples where TDEC is improving the quality of life in the region through effective teamwork.

Last week I joined Governor Bredesen and other members of the Cabinet in the official unveiling of Tennessee's One Stop Business Resource for new businesses. One-Stop is an application that automates a wide range of new business activities performed by various state agencies.

One-Stop enables new businesses to handle most of their registration, permit application, certificate submission and payments through an online mechanism. Specific TDEC related activities included in the One-Stop package include Underground Storage Tank (UST) and X-Ray equipment registration and payment. Michelle Pruett of our UST Division and Roger Fenner of Radiological Health were instrumental in helping develop this capacity for One-Stop.

It is very gratifying to see our department involved in so many important interagency efforts – at the local and state level – where we are creating a better business climate while still focusing on our mission to protect public health and the environment.

As we approach this season of thanksgiving, I want to share my appreciation with each of you for all you do for the department and the people of Tennessee. I am grateful for your skills, your expertise and your commitment to building stronger, healthier communities. What you get done every day in the field, in the office or in our parks creates an even brighter future for Tennessee. While I don't get to say it as often as I would like: Thank you for making a difference.



Commissioner Jim Fyke

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim". The signature is stylized with a large, looped 'J' and a simple 'im'.

Public Looks to TDEC to Ensure Safe Dams

Recent breaches to levees in New Orleans and dams in New England have raised the public's awareness of dam safety issues across the nation. While dams often create a mental picture of incredible structures like Hoover and Boulder Dam in the western United States or Dale Hollow, Percy Priest or Norris Dam here in Tennessee, a dam is considered to be any structure that can impound at least 30 acre-feet of water or is at least 20 feet high. There are more than 1,000 dams in Tennessee and most are earthen dams, 50 feet or less in height. About 30 dams are concrete, the tallest being 50 feet high. There are eight dams larger than 100 feet, the tallest being a coal tailings dam in Marion County that is 315 feet high.



The dam at Acorn Lake, Montgomery Bell State Park.

Tennessee's Safe Dams Act has given TDEC the regulatory responsibility for 642 of the 1,168 non-federal dams located in the state. Besides federal dams operated by agencies like TVA or the U.S Corps of Engineers, the department does not have authority to regulate the 526 private dams owned by individuals, which are mostly farm ponds not open to the public in any way.

Dams are identified as high hazard, significant hazard or low hazard. This determination does not indicate the quality of the dam, but rather it reflects what is located downstream from the dam. Mainly it is a measure of people living and working downstream, which would increase the potential negative impact should a dam failure occur. High hazard dams present a potential threat to populated areas in the case of dam failure. Significant hazard dams could cause property damage upon failure but would be unlikely to cause loss of life. Low hazard dams pose a minimal threat to both people and property downstream in the case of failure.

It is important to note that the Safe Dams Act is working in Tennessee. In 1983, an aggressive outreach program was implemented that resulted in the compliance rate going from less than 10 percent in the early 1980s to over 90 percent by 2000. Currently, more than 97 percent of the dams regulated by TDEC have operating permits and are in full compliance. There are 16 dams presently violating the Safe Dams Act. Most of these violations fall into the minor category, such as the dam not being mowed or cleared sufficiently to allow adequate inspection.

A Look at TDEC's Safe Dams Program

The Division of Water Supply's Safe Dams program has a staff of five engineers and one geologist who inspect Tennessee's dams for safety and require that they meet stability and spillway standards in order to get an operating permit. Dams are inspected every one, two or three years depending on their hazard status – high, significant or low respectively. When dams are found to be unsafe, staff review plans for repairing them and issue alteration permits for such repairs. The program also reviews plans for new dams and require that they meet strict standards in order to get a construction permit. Unregulated dams are reviewed every five years by the program for changes in ownership and hazard category.

Protecting People and Property

There are a total of 212 high hazard dams in Tennessee. TDEC regulates 147 of these dams. The State of Tennessee, through agencies like Tennessee State Parks or the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) own 155 dams. Twenty-five of these dams are considered high hazard.

For more information about the Safe Dams program, visit www.tdec.net/dws/safedams.php.

The Safe Dams program has been a positive for public safety in Tennessee. There have been 39 known dam failures in the state since the passage of the Safe Dams Act in 1973. Thirty-five of those failures occurred at dams that were not regulated, mostly privately owned farm ponds that avoid current safety standards and regular inspections.

Unfortunately, the importance of dam safety tends to be overlooked until a failure occurs. New Jersey, Mississippi, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and New Hampshire have experienced recent failures of dams in their states. Each has responded to these incidents with increased resources for their state's dam safety programs. TDEC's Safe Dams program is proud of its contribution to increased protection for people and property in Tennessee. We encourage policy makers to note that an important way to continue protecting Tennesseans from dam failures is to ensure adequate staff and budget support for regular dam inspection and enforcement of safety standards.

World Wide Water Monitoring Day on the Swan Creek

On October 18, The Farm School, with support from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's Green School's Program and Tennessee Scenic Rivers Association's Duck River Opportunities Project (DROP), participated in World Water Monitoring Day, sampling on Swan Creek in the Duck River watershed.

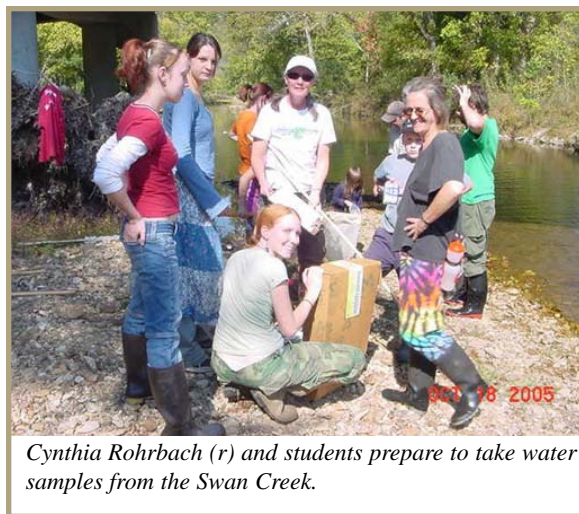
The Duck River is home to some 54 freshwater mussel species, 151 species of fish and some 20 aquatic snails. As such, the Nature Conservancy considers the Duck River one of the most biologically diverse, if not the most biologically diverse freshwater river system in the world.

Twelve students accompanied by five adults sampled two sites on Swan Creek in Lewis County, near Hohenwald. Sites were sampled for chemical, physical and biological characteristics. The chemical measures included dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature and nutrients, while physical characteristics included width, depth and stream bed conditions, such as the presence of sediment.

Biological sampling included collecting benthic macroinvertebrates (aka aquatic insects) in a effort to determine the overall health of the river system. Utilizing the DROP volunteer aquatic insect sampling and analysis method, sites scored in the good to excellent range. This was consistent with other data collected by professional biologists and data previously collected by volunteers. Swan Creek is one of the highest quality tributaries within the globally significant Duck River watershed.

Volunteer data is important in that it helps resource managers determine if streams are negatively impacted. While it is less sensitive than professional data, it helps focus limited staff from natural resource agencies and can be utilized by volunteers to direct change in land management strategies.

TSRA's Duck River Opportunities Project actively works with local landowners, educators, communities, agencies and volunteers to improve water quality in the Duck River watershed and to provide watershed education in local communities for long-term watershed health. For more information about TSRA, [click here](#).



Cynthia Rohrbach (r) and students prepare to take water samples from the Swan Creek.

North Chickamauga Creek Streambank Stabilization Project Nears Completion

Residents and streams in Southeast Tennessee are benefiting from a significant partnership effort between TDEC, Congressman Zach Wamp, Economic and Community Development, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the town of Soddy-Daisy, the Southeast Tennessee Development District and former state legislator Jim Vincent. For the past two years, local, state and federal officials have been working with home and business owners to develop plans and find resources that would arrest the significant erosion that was cutting off huge chunks of stream bank during heavy rainfalls.

Local home and land owners will see this waterway stabilized by the installation of nearly 500 feet of gabion mattress – rock-filled wire baskets – to hold the stream bank and soil in place. Project engineers are pleased with the gabion installation, low flow reactions in the channel and the ability to maintain existing vegetation. The entire project should be completed by the first of the year.



Mole Day at Stratford High School in Nashville

Ella Carpenter, Nashville Environmental Field Office, and Jennifer Watson, Water Pollution Control, helped students at Nashville's Stratford High School celebrate National Mole Day on October 23. Mole Day was created as a way to foster interest in chemistry as schools throughout the country and around the world celebrate with various activities related to chemistry and or moles.

So why is a chemistry celebration named for a blind furry burrower? It's not that kind of mole... for a given molecule, one mole is a mass (in grams) whose number is equal to the atomic mass of the molecule. For example, the water molecule has an atomic mass of 18, therefore one mole of water weighs 18 grams. An atom of neon has an atomic mass of 20, therefore one mole of neon weighs 20 grams. In general, one mole of any substance contains Avogadro's Number of molecules or atoms of that substance. This relationship was first discovered by Amedeo Avogadro (1776-1858) and he received credit for this after his death. Source: www.moleday.org

Ella introduced the concept of cave forming to the kids by dropping small amounts of hydrochloric acid on various types of rock. Any rock composed of calcium compounds will react to the acid with a fizz. Slowly this reaction occurs in nature through the drainage of slightly acidic rain as it eats away at limestone, creating underground caves.



Ella mesmerized the students with practical chemical applications including lighting a dollar soaked in water and acetone on fire. The volatile, acetone, burned off quickly while the water protected the dollar itself from burning.

Warriors' Path State Park to be Home for Area's First Boundless Playground

Commissioner Fyke recently attended the groundbreaking for Northeast Tennessee's first boundless playground at Warriors' Path State Park. The park will be accessible to children of most all abilities, including those with physical, developmental and sensory disabilities. Warriors' Path State Park will be the first state park in the country to have such a playground.

"We're proud that Tennessee will be the first state in the country to build a boundless playground in a state park," said Environment and Conservation Commissioner Jim Fyke. "The people of the Tri-Cities came together and worked with the park to make this project possible and we appreciate their creativity and commitment to such a worthy cause."



l-r: Rob Sherrill, Commissioners' Office, Herb Roberts, State Parks East Tennessee regional manager, Commissioner Jim Fyke, Bobby Harbin, Warriors' Path State Park manager and Assistant Commissioner of Parks Mike Carlton join the spadework at the groundbreaking for the new boundless playground at Warriors' Path State Park.

Tennessee State Employees Win EPA Award

On October 25, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) presented the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) with a State Government Partner of the Year Award for making recycling a priority for state employees and Tennessee residents.

Through the State Employee Recycling Program (SERP), the department educates more than 24,000 state employees about waste reduction and recycling. SERP is active at 132 facilities in eight cities across the state collecting about 10 materials for recycling at each site. The state's Green for Good Program collects some more unusual items for recycling or reuse, including eyeglasses, hangers, cell phones, and greeting cards.

EPA was proud to honor the department for these extraordinary achievements at the WasteWise 2005 Annual Conference. TDEC is one of only 10 organizations to receive a Partner of the Year Award at this event.

WasteWise is a free and voluntary partnership program launched by EPA in 1994. The program provides guidance and recognition to more than 1,800 participating organizations that are working to find practical methods to reduce municipal solid waste and improve financial performance. This is the third year in a row the EPA has recognized the department and SERP's sustained commitment to waste reduction.

For more information about EPA's WasteWise program, please visit the WasteWise Web site at www.epa.gov/wastewise or contact the WasteWise Helpline at (800) 372-9473.



L-R: Matt Hale, director, Office of Solid Waste, George Kesterson, state employee recycling coordinator, Tom Dunne, acting assistant administrator for the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. Photo courtesy of John Boatright.

State Employee Recycling Program (SERP) – Lets Get WasteWise

Americans discard four million tons of office paper each year, enough to build a 12-foot high wall of paper from New York to California. In the case of office paper, the equivalent of three barrels of oil is saved for each ton of paper recycled. The production of recycled paper uses half the amount of water required to produce virgin paper. The process of manufacturing paper from previously used paper instead of from trees produces almost 60 percent less air and water pollution.

As more and more communities are running out of landfill space, diverting a valuable resource such as high-grade office paper from the waste disposal stream makes sense. Paper is presently the largest single item going into landfills, and burying this resource is senseless.

The State Employee Recycling Program (SERP) is recycling at a rate of 72.75 tons of office paper per month. It is saving the state over \$2,182 monthly in landfill costs plus the cost of extra dumpsters and compactors. From January 1, 1990 to December 31, 2004, state employees recycled 13,095 tons of mixed office paper. This produced revenue of \$87,343 for the state, while avoiding \$392,877 in landfill costs. These revenues are deposited in the Solid Waste Management

Fund.

So, let's think before we use that piece of paper, that envelope, that disposable cup. If we all make small changes in our daily operations and change a few habits, we can make a big difference, both to the environment and to our bottom line. For more information about SERP visit www.tdec.net/ea/serp/ or call (615) 532-0079.

Here are a few examples of how we incur costs when we don't act "WasteWise"

- ◆ Every time we toss a binder in the trash, it's like three dollars down the drain
- ◆ Hanging folder, about 65 cents
- ◆ File folder, about 15 cents
- ◆ Using one routing envelope 38 times saves about two dollars

SERP recycling goals for 2005

- ◆ 1,750,000 pounds of mixed office paper
- ◆ 3,900 pounds of aluminum
- ◆ 2,500 pounds of plastic.

Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication. ~Leonardo DaVinci

Times and Trails

People, Projects and Priorities

TDEC Employees Assist Record Breaking Dell Computer Recycling Event



Above: Greg Forte, Air Pollution Control; Tracy Carter, senior director for Air Resources; Kelly Morrison, Water Pollution Control; at the Dell Computer Recycling event at Vanderbilt University in Nashville.

Top Left: Bill Avant, State Parks, delivers recycling services with a smile.

Bottom Left: Lori Munkeboe, director for the Office of Environmental Assistance, steps nimbly between mountains of recycled computers and monitors.



The event collected almost 100 tons of used electronics and raised consumer awareness regarding the issue of responsible recovery, reuse and recycling of old computers, monitors and keyboards. Computers contain some environmentally sensitive materials that should not go into landfills.

Parks Booth Wins “Best in Show” at Mid-South Fair in Memphis

T.O. Fuller and Meeman-Shelby State Parks sponsored a booth at the Mid-South Fair in Memphis, from September 23 through October 1. With over 1000 booth visitors daily, Tennessee State Parks helped to educate and inform visitors about the active role of state parks in the area.



T.O. Fuller State Park Ranger Ronnie Douglas and Golf Course Manager John Willoughby were presented “Best of Show” at the Mid-South Fair.

The booth provided visitors with the opportunity to get close to some of Tennessee’s native wildlife and learn about park amenities. The booth was a huge success and won “best of show” in its division.

Thanks to the help of T.O.

Fuller State Park Staff: Manager Markee Tate; Golf Course Manager John Willoughby; Rangers: Ronnie Douglas, Torian Harris, and Brandi Caldwell; Clerks: Brenda Pye, Kameisha Moorlet and the T.O. Fuller State Park Golf Course Staff and Volunteers: Sherrie Flowers, Mira Fuller, Charles Young, Manwell Cheers, Van Rutherford, Kennedy Young and Jackie Geer. Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park staff: Manager Steve Smith; Rangers Jeff Utley, Sam Morouney, and Monque Johnson.



Ranger Jeff Utley, Meeman-Shelby Forest State Park with some of the many visitors at the State Park booth.

Department Salutes Solid Waste Management's Jerry Ingram for 40 Years of Service



Solid and Hazardous Waste Director Mike Apple, Jerry Ingram and Deputy Commissioner Paul Sloan recently recognized Jerry's 40 years of public service to the state and its citizens. Congratulations Jerry!

Jim Webb named Golf Director for Tennessee State Parks

Jim Webb recently joined Tennessee State Parks as Golf Director. Jim is a Professional Golf Association (PGA) member with more than 25 years golf management experience as an executive with the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA), the Tennessee Section PGA and tournament director for major events on three different continents. "We are entering an exciting, new period for State Parks' Tennessee Golf Trail. Jim's skills in course operations, administration, negotiation and teaching will help us strengthen and grow state parks' golf programs," said TDEC Commissioner Jim Fyke. Jim Webb is a native Tennessean and Navy veteran who began his career as the Head Golf Professional at Lakewood Country Club in Tullahoma.



Jim Webb

Foster Children Need Our Help

Foster children between the ages of 13-18 are often overlooked during the holiday season. Because clothes and other needed items are hard to select for this group, the Department of Children's Services has suggested monetary donations and gift cards. If you can help bring some holiday cheer to a foster child or would like more information contact Billy Pugh, Air Pollution Control at (615) 532-0528 or billy.pugh@state.tn.us.

November Service Anniversaries

5 Years

Bobby Byrd, Paris Landing State Park
Brenda Johnson, Fall Creek Falls State Park
Brent Measles, Fall Creek Falls State Park
Carmen Edwards, Montgomery Bell State Park
Christina Conley, Cumberland Mountain State Park
Emily Kelly, Community Assistance
James Ogle, Air Pollution Control, Knoxville EFO
Jan Kromhout, Fort Loudoun State Park
Jennifer Bowman, Water Pollution Control, Cookeville EFO
Joellyn Brazile, Water Pollution Control, Memphis EFO
Kimberly Graves, Solid Waste Management
Vic Loyd, Henry Horton State Park

10 Years

Anne Marshall, Recreational Services, Johnson City EFO
Stephen Turner, Remediation, Knoxville EFO
Steve Ward, Radnor Lake State Park

15 Years

Christine Standefer, Fall Creek Falls State Park
Forrest Evans, Natural Heritage
Kenneth Wooley, Natchez Trace State Park
Kristi Everts, Paris Landing State Park
Mitchell Renfroe, Natchez Trace State Park
Randy Slater, Underground Storage Tank, Chattanooga EFO
Rebecca Adams, Pickwick Landing State Park

20 Years

Connie Lane, Solid Waste Management
Deborah Duvall, Henry Horton State Park
Donald Molder, Henry Horton State Park
Gail Blankenship, Natchez Trace State Park
Jesse Jones, Water Pollution Control, Knoxville EFO
Robert Banks, Cedars of Lebanon State Park

25 Years

Jere Dougan, Water Pollution Control, Jackson EFO
Steve Goins, Remediation

30 Years

Carol Williams, Air Pollution Control, Columbia EFO
Don Myatt, Tennessee State Parks
Howard Riggs, Cove Lake State Park

35 Years

Linda Kennedy, DOE Oversight, Knoxville EFO

Out and About with the Commissioners

Commissioners Visit Copper Basin Remediation Site in Polk County – One of the Most Significant Cleanup Locations in the Eastern U.S.



Long-term cleanup at Copper Basin, Tennessee's largest Superfund site, continues to revive the land and restore the Ocoee River for aquatic life and recreational sports.



Assistant Commissioner Mike Carlton, Commissioner Jim Fyke and Greer Tidwell, Sr. discuss status of remediation near Potato Creek at Copper Basin.



Deputy Commissioner Paul Sloan inspects revegetation progress at Copper Basin.

Commissioner Fyke Addresses Plateau Citizens' Summit at Cumberland Mountain State Park



Fall Creek Falls Ranger Stuart Carroll and Alliance for the Cumberland Director Katherine Medlock at Cumberland Mountain State Park.

Sewanee Professor Charles Brockett, Plateau Project Coordinator Katharine Wilkerson and Commissioner Jim Fyke outside of Cumberland Mountain State Park after the Plateau Citizens' Summit on October 28.



Commissioner Fyke Celebrates the Impact of LPRF Grant at Opening of Brownsville Park



Commissioner Fyke was in Haywood County recently to congratulate the City of Brownsville on the opening of their new park that was made possible with a Local Parks and Recreation (LPRF) grant. Joining Commissioner Fyke were Ann Banks, City of Brownsville, Nancy McClure, Chamber of Commerce, Webb Banks, Brownsville Mayor, Nancy Cates, Brownsville Parks Director, Chuck Walker, Carlson Consulting, Commissioner Fyke, Gerald Parish, TDEC's PARTAS.

Commissioner Fyke Meets with New U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Commander for Mid Tennessee



Commissioner Jim Fyke, TWRA Executive Director Gary Myers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Lt. Col. Steven Roemhildt and Corps Deputy for Program Management Mike Wilson.

Tennessee Time Travelers at Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park

Have you ever thought you were born in the wrong decade? Or did you ever wish to visit a particular person or time period? Time travel might be available only in science fiction, but on October 14 and 15, the Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park brought 200 years of events to over 4,000 visitors during Tennessee's History Festival. Visitors to the park were introduced to past Tennessee personalities like Hernando DeSoto, David Crockett, Andrew Jackson, Sam Davis, Fredrick Douglas, Abraham Lincoln, Robert E. Lee and Alvin C. York. While eating a GooGoo Cluster in the warm, afternoon sunshine, park visitors could tour time spanning the Woodland Indian Period to the Gulf War Era during this two-day event.

Live performances featuring Tennessee greats were held in the Greek-style Amphitheater. Rick Revel as David Crockett opened the show performing famous songs about Crockett and teaching visitors about frontier life. Dave McCardle from the Hermitage discussed highlights from Andrew Jackson's presidency. Cliff Kelley from the Sam Davis Home in Smyrna performed his rendition of the classical speech given before the Sam Davis hanging for spying against the Union. And to finish the afternoon, Dennis Boggs as President Abraham Lincoln gave his famous Gettysburg address.

Along the Tennessee History Wall, visitors to the park could also talk with Dan Petterson as Hernando DeSoto, who displayed his armor-clad horse, soldier's armor, and encampment from the Spanish exploration period. State Park Rangers Sam Reed, Will Kinton, and Eric Hughey portrayed life for British soldiers at Fort Loudoun State Park along beside Native American's B.L. Rode and Anthony Martin. Reliving the Woodland Indian time period were Mark and Sherry Finchum, who cooked food over an open fire and displayed hunting techniques of the Cherokee men and women.



Sherry Finchum prepares chestnuts for cooking chestnut bread over an open fire.

Tennessee History Wall were Vietnam War Era examples. Finishing the tour through history was a display for the Gulf War era set up by Ranger Darren Haas of the Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park.



American soldiers from World War II around their M-1 Garand rifles.

Along the interior of the park, visitors could throw a belt axe and witness fire-making demonstrations from Bicentennial Park Manager Mike Cole and Ranger Damon Graham portraying the long hunter while Steve Marshall conducted talks over an active blacksmith display. A few steps away were Bill Radcliffe, Norm Hill, Kenneth Sliviak, Tom Forehand, Ranger Rick Brooks and Tom Wooten in the Civil War encampment with soldiers from the Blue and the Gray. Close by was Park Manager Theda Young with a display from New Johnsonville State Park.

Back along the wall was Deanne Weston stationed at the Tennessee Walking Horse display, chair maker and suffragette Marie Harrell, Cordell Hull Park Manager Robin Peeler and Ranger Harry Hampton as World War I hero Alvin Cullum York. At the World War II Memorial, both American and German forces from the war were portrayed. Further down the

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The Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park has already begun plans for next year's festival to be held on October 13 and 14. The 2006 festival will add a Cherokee/Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Mexican-American War period displays. The park would like to thank Bridgestone Firestone for their generous grant that made many more performers available to the public and Roger Hendrick, hospitality manager of Montgomery Bell State Park, for the delicious meal. Park Manager Mike Cole said, "We would also like to invite all the historic State Parks, living history participants, craftspeople, and interested volunteers to the park for next year's festival. Those persons wishing to become involved in the 2006 Tennessee History Festival can contact Ranger Harry Hampton at 615-741-5280 or at Harry.Hampton@state.tn.us for further details. Click [here](#) to view a slideshow of the event.

People, Projects and Priorities



Dan Petterson portrays Spanish explorer Hernando DeSoto with his armor-clad horse.

Johnson City Environmental Field Office Receives Award

Mark Braswell, manager of the Johnson City Environmental Field Office, accepted an award of appreciation from the First Tennessee Development District during the Saturday, November 5, District meeting.

"The award was quite a surprise, but I was proud to accept it on behalf of the Johnson City Environmental Field Office," said Braswell. "Our relationship with the Development District has come a long way from years past and it's due in no small part to the efforts of the staff of this office and the great personnel and leadership of the Development District."

The First Tennessee Development District provides general and comprehensive planning and development

activities for local governments, including: economic and community development financing, research and planning and environmental management activities. The group serves eight counties in Northeast Tennessee.



Congratulations to the Johnson City Environmental Field Office!



Happy Holidays
November 24 and 25 – Thanksgiving



Times and Trails is published monthly by the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation.

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